DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 738 SP 036 035

AUTHOR Colnerud, Gunnel
TITLE Loyalty Conflicts in Teacher Ethics.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 16p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Codes of Ethics; *Collegiality; Elementary Secondary Education; *Ethics; Foreign Countries; Moral Values; Privacy; Public School Teachers; *Role Conflict; *Student School Relationship; Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Responsibility; *Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Sweden

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes situations where teachers' loyalties to colleagues are in conflict with their loyalty to their students. According to written reports about ethical conflicts from 163 teachers in different, compulsory schools, teachers would have liked to report bad treatment of students by teachers or bad institutional policies towards students, but they did not break their loyalty to their colleagues and institutions. Ethical conflicts were found to arise from teachers' awareness of both eye-witness and hearsay problem situations between teacher and student and between student and institution. The teachers delivered 256 examples of experienced ethical conflicts, most involved caring for the student and questioning of a colleague's behavior towards students. The ethical metaphor of "whistleblowing" is used to analyze the universal difficulty of confronting a colleague. To blow the whistle on another teacher involves interfering in a colleague's private space--something no teacher wants to experience personally. In conclusion it would seem that teachers can be morally good only when the act does not conflict with an institutional norm and when it does not interfere with a colleague's privacy; also that it would be hardly possible to make ethical norms explicit in order to strengthen professional ethics in the teaching profession. (Contains 23 references.) (NAV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 392 738

Gunnel Colnerud
Department of Education
and Psychology
University of Linköping
S-581 83 Linköping
Sweden

Abstract.

LOYALTY CONFLICTS IN TEACHER ETHICS

Teachers are, in their daily work, put into situations where they face various ethical conflicts in their relationships to the students. This study focuses situations putting teachers' loyalty to colleagues in conflict with loyalty to the pupils. According to the empirical data, consisting of written reports about ethical conflicts from 163 teachers in compulsory school, several teachers experience ethical conflicts to act or not, when a colleague treats the pupils badly or unfairly. They say they want to, but they do not, break their loyalty to those colleagues.

The ethical metaphore of "whistleblowing" (Bok, 1988) is used to analyse the universal difficulties of confronting a colleague. Whistleblowing affects three elements; *dissent*, *breach of loyalty* and *accusition*. Those three elements are activated in the problems of collegiality examined in this study; when teachers are eye-witnesses to and would like to call into question a colleague's treatment of pupils and when teachers become aware of such behaviour by hear-say. The discussion also concerns institutional norms. Teachers experience similar conflicts of loyalty when they call into question acting requiered from the school as insitution and which they think is harmful to the pupils. The pressures exerted by the three elements of whistleblowing seems to be universal and common for teachers and other professions.

However, there are also some specific difficulties for teachers as a professional group to The school-system itself sometimes requires teachers to behave in a way that violate ethical norms. Teachers have to fullfil their responsibilities not only to pupils, but also to society in terms of socialization. This can be contradictory to an explicit common code of ethics for teachers.

The conclusion of the present study is that teachers locally, in their teacher-teams, could use the opportunity to examine their ethical conflicts together, in order to discuss and formulate a local code of ethics. A code which could include their right and their obligation to blow the whistle on behalf of their pupils, instead of waiting for a referee to stop the game.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G Colnerud

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP 036 035

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Gunnel Colnerud
Department of Education
and Psychology
University of Linköping
S-581 83 Linköping
Sweden

94 03 27

LOYALTY CONFLICTS IN TEACHER ETHICS

Aspects of teacher professionalism

Teachers want to be good teachers. Good teachers can be called professional. They can also be described as *morally good teachers* (Clark, 1991). This paper has the aim to contribute to the discussion of teacher ethics, especially concerning the difficulties and the possibilities for teachers trying to be what Clark is calling morally good. Empirical research of teachers ethical conflicts constitutes the basis for the provided study.

Seeing the phenomenon to be a good teacher as a matter of professionalism leads to questions about professional ethics. Professional ethics are not different from but specifications of universal ethics. The values important in social life are relevant also in professional life. However, since the professionals are allowed to interfere in our privacy in different ways that we as private individuals usually don´t do there are some important applications of universal ethics to be specified. Because of of the exceptions from common socially norms there has to be principles telling the professionals the limits of the exceptions and the rank of the values behind each exception. The surgeon for example has the right to cut in our bodies as long as he serves a more important value - our health. To save us from injury is the most important value. That is why he can cause us some temporary injury without being immoral.

How would teachers´professional ethics be formulated and what exceptions from universal ethics would be relevant? Teachers have power. Students have not. Teachers decide a lot of things concerning the students. Teachers have the right to judge and asses students´ work. Teachers are supposed to socialize into common norms which can be perceived as indoctrination. Teachers are supposed to more or less frustrate students in order to challenge their learning and development. Derived from these examples of teachers professional tasks contradictory

to universal social norms there would be needed some ethical norm telling teachers how to avoid missusing their power. The overall purpose of teaching ought to be the wellbeing of the students, why other functions must be excessed in awareness of that primar value.

It could be relevant to object to this interpretation of being morally good as being aware of professional ethics. Professional ethics does not garantue morally good professionals. To be morally good is more than following some Code of Ethics of one´s profession. You can avoid the ethical limits pointed out by the code without being especially good. To be good is to act activly to increase the well-being of others - in teachers´professional life that means the well-being of the students. That is also Clark´s definition of being morally good- namely to satisfy the basic needs of the students.

Usually theories of professionalization do not discuss the question of being morally good - and this can be seen as a deficiency. However, a definition like the following made by Sockett´s is a step towards that direction. He hereby introduces the question of ethical relations and being professional as two related phenomenon. *Professionalism describes the quality of practice; it describes the conduct within an occupation - how members integrate their obligations with their knowledge and skill in a context of collegiality and contractual and ethical relations with clients* (Sockett, 1990, p 226). The basis of this is the inherent moral relationship between the professional and the client, in this case between the teacher and the student. Ethics is first and foremost a matter of interpersonal relationsships.

The definition of professionalism made by Sockett also combines collegiality with an ethical relation to client. However, he mention these aspects as compatible without problems. As a matter of fact this is the object of the ethical conflicts discussed in this paper - the conflict between being loyal to colleagues or being loyal to students. The referred exampels of ethical conflicts in teachers daily work are used to illustrate the difficulties teachers meet in their trials to be morally good.

Research on teacher ethics

Interest in teacher ethics as an important aspect of teacher professionalism is increasing after a period of neglect (Clark,1991; Elbaz, 1991). It has, according to Terhart (1987) been a non-theme for a long period in educatonal research and teacher education. Research on teacher ethics consists predominantly of theoretical writings. Formal aspects of teacher ethics in terms of ethical codes, ethical norms and ethics in teacher education have been discussed (Strike & Soltis, 1985). Other aspects of the moral dimensions of teaching, like responsibility, moral

accountability and trust are also discussed on a philosophical and theoretical base (Goodlad,1990). The current interest in teacher ethics seems to be an international phenomenon. The european discussion, similar to the American one, focuses on teacher ethics in relation to the specificity of teaching profession. According to Terhart (1987) teachers´ tasks as well as their position in society give convincing arguments for the need to develop an ethics of teaching.

There is also a cognitive developmental approach in the field of ethics in school (Kohlberg, 1981; Higgins, 1990; Oser, 1990) As interest in this cognitive tradition is focused on moral education rather than on the professional relationship between teacher and student, it is not discussed further here. However, there are connections between those different aspects of ethics for teachers. Teachers are moral models, they teach morals and they are guided by moral norms in their professional practice whether explicit or implicit. Some researchers combine different aspects in their theories. Tom (1984), for instance, focuses on two moral dimensions of teaching. The first one is the power-relation between the teacher and the student, which has moral implications for the teacher. The other dimension concerns moral responsibility for the content to be taught. The teacher is a guarantor for the content to be valuable for the students. The dependency between student and teacher indicates that students have to trust teachers, not only as individual educators but also as a reliable professional group.

In contrast to most of the research cited above this study is based on empirical data. The aim of the present study is to explore the professional ethics of teachers as a professional quality, and to throw some light on some of the ethical demands which teachers have to handle in their daily work. The main question at issue concerns teachers´ defense of pupils´ rights. The topical problems relate to situations where teachers do not follow what they intuitively or consciously think is the right thing to do. They fail to act in a way they themselves define as morally good. The method used in the study is to supplement theoretical and normative arguments with information given by teachers in practice.

The concept of whistle-blowing

As a contribution to this kind of problems this paper discusses teacher ethics in terms of one special moral act, namely "whistle-blowing", as defined and described by Bok (1988).

Whistleblowing is a concept in professional ethics emanating from the increased awareness of ethical conflicts in the professional life. One definition of this concept could be *the attempt by an employee or former*

employee of an organization to disclose what he or she believes to be wrongdoing in or by the organization (James, 1988, p 315).

This definition may include disclosing what a single colleague within the organization is doing wrong or unfairly - especially when the organization legitimates the behaviour by no intervening. *The alarm of the whistleblower is intended to disrupt the status quo; to pierce the background noise; perhaps the false harmony or the imposed silence of "affairs as usual"* (Bok, 1988, p 332). The teachers in this study are reporting problems that arise if they disrupt the status quo of misused power and unveil the false harmony that exists in the relation between some of their colleagues and their pupils.

Method and empirical data.

This study is part of an investigation concerning teachers´ ethical conflicts. 163 teachers from different schools were asked to write examples of what they perceived as difficult situations in teachers´ work from an ethical point of view. They answered the following request: *Write shortly about a situation or a type of situations when you think it is difficult to know what is right or wrong to do from an ethical/ moral piont of view in relation to students, parents or colleagues.* The teachers delivered 256 examples of what they experience as ethical conflicts in their work. These answers illustrate the various ethical demands in the everyday life of schools. Some of these answers will be quoted verbatim (in translation from Swedish) to illustrate two kinds of demands inside the theme for this article met by teachers and to provide an empirical base for a theoretical discussion about teacher ethics. The intention is to investigate what teachers themselves are telling us about teacher ethics. The aim of the study is consequently not to give statistical evidence for any pattern of teachers´ ethical conflicts.

A dominant category of described conflicts concerns the caring dimension of teachers´ work, which will be discussed in a future article. There seems to be a relevant conflict between a role of active care on the one hand and an ambition to respect the child´s or the family´s integrity and privacy on the other hand.

Another type of ethical conflicts concerns the subject of the present study, namely situations where a teacher calls in question a colleague´s behaviour against the pupils. These situations are characterised by - among others - the difficulty of breaking the implicit rule of loyalty. The conflicts relate to two categories of situations:

- When teachers are eye-witnesses to and would like to call in question a colleague´s treatment of the pupils.

- When teachers become aware of such behaviour by hear-say.

These two kinds of conflicts activate problems of professional moral responsibilities conflicting collegial loyalty. In this context the concept of whistle-blowing could be a useful metaphor to understand the universal difficulties reported by several teachers. Later on the discussion focuses the more specific difficulties emanating from the entire structural conditions for the teaching profession.

The problem of being an eye-witness

A recurrent theme among the examples given by the teachers is the problem that arises if one is critical of a colleague´s treatment of pupils. One teacher describes this situation:

Sometimes I meet colleagues who treat pupils without respect; They give sarcastic comments which the children do not understand. It is difficult to correct the colleague. There is often not enough time to talk about it.
I sometimes try to smile and send supporting signals to the child. But I want to do more. This is a conflict!

This is one example of an ethical conflict concerning collegiality. This excerpt refers to a situation in which the teacher herself notices a behaviour, which she regards as bad, incompetent or as an unfair treatment of the pupils. In this category of conflicts the teachers are witnessing the behaviour of a colleague; they want to make some sort of protest - blow the whistle - in order to put the light on the pupils well-being, but they don´t. This is an urgent problem for several teachers in this study. They describe the questioned behaviour of the colleague in various ways, but the essential issues are the same - the colleague does not take into consideration the feelings or needs of the students. They are described as unfair, they are scaring the students by their cold and stern way of being, they offend the students, they punish students in a humiliating way, they infringe the privacy of the students etc. The teachers are aware of the students lack of power in the actual situations. The students have no possibility to object to their teachers behaviour. That is why the witnessing teacher feel obliged to make a protest on behalf of the students. They know that if they don´t blow the whistle, then the colleagues probably never get any feed-back at all to their way of treating students.

Certainly, there are teachers who blow the whistle, who confront the colleague. However, those teachers do not describe these situations as conflicts since they manage to cope with them. It would be interesting to examine the origin of such behaviour. Does it emanate from individual civil courage or is it a professionally gained skill? However, this study is concerned with those who want to blow the whistle but cannot manage. They describe themselves as cowards. Their reports can give us, what Clark (1990) calls, "some insight into some of the temptations to moral failure encountered in the relationship between the teacher and the taught" (p 264). The following example is of the same category:

I work in a class one day a week when the classteacher is free. She is a teacher who is said to be very competent. She effectively controls the class. The pupils are always sitting silent doing their work when she is inside the classroom. She is a very ambitious teacher. It is a pity that she also is very authoritarian.
Even I as her colleague, working together with her, feel her authority. I probably behave like the pupils,becoming stiff and artificial afraid of doing anything wrong. I think the discipline is too strong. Beware the one who forgets something or who has not done his homework.

When I teach in the class they are relaxed and they also become more talkative (which makes me a worse teacher?) I do not think this ironhand is good for them. I know how I myself feel when she is correcting and arguing. I shrink, even if she is not turning to me. I think it is difficult to be myself and stand up for my style. I think the children do a better job if they are secure without an ironhand.

This example is a typical description of the behaviour of a colleague in the study. Teachers also describe situations of the gray everyday life of unspoken differences in norms and disagreements between colleagues. There are examples of quite more superficial character, for example criticism of the mess in the class-room next door. These situations are not categorised as ethical problems since they do not refer to a situation where ethical values are put at stake. The hesitation to recommend that a colleague should tidy up her classroom is more a question of etiquette than of ethics. The primary conflicts in the examples, which are taken into consideration, concern the choice between showing respect for pupils or for a colleague. One teacher bursts out: *It seems as if we never stand on the side of our pupils against unfair treatment.* Thereby, she indicates a relevant question. When and how do teachers stand on the side of the pupils at the cost of each other?

The problem of taking sides based on hear-say

Another category of ethical conflicts seems to be as difficult as the first one. It concerns situations when parents or pupils themselves ask the teacher to interfere or at least to agree with their complaints. One teacher gives this example:

It is difficult when students repeatedly and seriously criticize other teachers, for instance for coming late, giving bad explanations in teaching and unfair treatment. I think these situations are hard to cope with. How to talk to the colleague without offending him? Should you talk to the head, or just gossip with the others in the staffroom?

The conflict activated in this situation deals with one of the elements of whistleblowing: the accusation (Bok, 1988). When you are asked to criticize someone whose behaviour you have not witnessed yourself you run the risk of accusing an innocent. Even if you trust the pupils´ version of what is going on - and of course their *experience* of the events is true - it may not be sufficient basis for claiming that the colleague is doing wrong. The students may have misunderstood the aims of the colleague, they may be influenced by dynamic group processes, they may just give voice to their own prejudices. However, even if these explanations sometimes are valid - how is it that students almost never are right?

The relevance of the whistleblowing concept

The cases presented in this study do not include moral conflicts of the same scale as the Watergate scandal or the corresponding Swedish case, the Bofors incident, where employees took great risks in order to uncover corruption and lies. However, to individual pupils a humiliating event can affect their future lives. Every human being bears some responsibility for the quality of life of another. (Kristiansen, 1991). In every meeting we carry in our hands a part of each others opportunities in life. Løgstrup (1975) characterizes it as an ethical challenge to take care of other people´s quality of life, regardless of how much or how little of his life a person by trusting, gives into the hands of another. Teachers have pupils lives in their hands by their formal position in an even more powerful meaning than human beings in common, since the pupils are forced to stay under their control. From this perspective there is no reason to lessen the importance of teachers intervention, e g by whistle-blowing, in order to defend pupils values and rights.

Soder (1990) puts it this way. *Children are by nature defenseless. Children by tradition are taught to distrust strangers. But parents, in complying with compulsory schooling laws, turn their defenceless children over to virtual strangers. (Consider the amount of information most parents seek in selecting a baby-sitter versus the amount of information those same parents have about public school educators). The surrendering of children to the state´s schools thus represent a considerable act of trust. (....) Those responsible for the physical and mental health of children in schools have a moral obligation to ensure that children are kept from harm* (p 73).

The purpose of applying the concept of whistleblowing to everyday ethical conflicts experienced by teachers is to make teachers lack of courage to confront each other explicable. Whistleblowing contains three elements according to Bok (1988), *dissent, breach of loyalty* and *accusation.* All who dissent have to confront the conflict between conforming and sticking their necks out. One of the teachers in the present study gives an example where she describes that after confronting a colleague she always was attacked by that colleague in conferences and other meetings as some sort of retaliation. She really felt the effect of breaking the norm that states: mind your own business.

The two categories of conflicts concerning collegiality referred to above also illustrate two other elements of whistleblowing; breach of loyalty and accusation. *The whistleblower hopes to stop the game; but since he is neither referee nor coach, and since he is blowing the whistle on his own team, his act is seen as a violation of loyalty* (Bok,1988 p 333). Breaking loyalty to the colleague is apperantly seen as worse than breaking the moral obligations to the students. According to this norm the colleagues are more important than ethical considerations. In the present cases it is only the loyalty to one single colleague that is immediately risked, but it seems to be enough to stop the would-be whistleblower. The implicit norm tells the teacher not to intervene.

Perhaps the general difficulties shown by the whistle-blowing metaphor are enough to explain why teachers fail to be morally good in these actual ethical conflicts. However there are some significant conditions of teaching profession making it even worse difficult for teachers to be brave enough to blow the whistle or to act morally good in various other ways. In this paper we will discuss only one of them; the double mandate.

The double mandate

Teaching profession is caracterized by its double mandate. Teachers´ professional acting is supposed to gain both the state with its *societal norms* and the individual *students´ needs.* The fact that teachers are hold responsible for great parts of the socialization of the students make them obliged to sometimes frustrate the students´ needs and feelings. This is convincingly shown by the revelation of the hidden curriculum. It may even be an basic assumption that it is good for the students´ development to be treated with little respect for their own needs. *They must (...) learn to suffer in silence. They are expected to bear with equanimity (...) the continued delay, denial, and interruption of their personal wishes and desires* (Jackson, 1968, p 18). According to this fact the lack of whistleblowing in school is only one immoral act among others that is directed to the students in the name of socialization. Clark (1990) is going

further when describing *The temptation to employ morally unjustifiable means (for example humilitation, segregation, violence) to achieve desired ends (for example order, obedience, compliance) is an institutionalized commonality of schooling* (p 264).

Compared to other professions e g physicians, teachers have a more complicated task in relation to the single individual. Physicians have the well-being of the patient as his main task. He has no aim to educate or with-draw the patient. There is no ambition to lessen the difference between the professional and the patient. The doctor are supposed to remain expert and the patient are supposed to rely on that expertise, perhaps with small exceptions concerning his own experience of the actual disease from which he is suffering. The relation between professional and patient is uncomplicated and openly unequal, and that makes the motives for explicit ethical norms convincing. When patients omit their needs in the hands of a professional they have to rely on his trustworthiness and his unimpeachable moral.

Teachers professional acting has the aim to lessen the distance between their expertise and the students - that is the point of education. The meaning of schooling is, so to say, that students will change side from being dependent - similar to dependent patients - to become independent experts themselves. Therefore the unequality between teacher and student may be seen as less important than is the case in other professional relations.

Conflicts between institutional and ethical norms

Teachers in this study report another kind of conflicts coming up when there is a discrepancy between a teacher´s opinion about what is appropriate for the pupils and the demands of the school system. One kind of examples of this category mostly concern evaluation, assessments and passing judgements on pupils. The teachers are, for instance, ordered to measure pupils´ skills by standardized instruments which do not correspond to their methods and individualized pedagogy. They also have to follow the official scale of grades which only takes into consideration measureable qualities. Some teachers describe the conflict of encouraging a pupil to perform his best and thereafter being forced to reward the effort with lowest mark. Their scruples are- as could be expected - especially strong concerning children with some learning-disabilities. Teachers reporting this kind of ethical conflicts do not blow the whistle, but they say they would like to. Darling-Hammond (1985) states *it is unethical for a teacher to conform to prescribed practices that are ultimately harmful to children. Yet that is what teachers are required to*

do by policies that are pedagogically inappropriate for some or all of their students(p. 213).

Another kind of examples refer to norms developed by the local school community. Teachers can, according to these reports, be obliged to make students eat food the do not like or cannot stand. They also feel the pressure to force pupils to stay out-side in the free-quarter, irrespecitve of the whether. Furthermore teachers have to investigate students´ suspected breaches of rules even if it involves violence of the students integrity. All these examples concern teachers´ obligation to follow common rules or agreements without questioning them. The teachers reporting this kind of conflicts anticipate that they could decide by themsleves if any exception should be possible. However, they do not dare to claim the right to take individual students needs into consideration. The pressure from norms coming up in school as an institution are stronger than their own ethical motives.

While whistle-blowing conflicts refer to situations when colleagues are immoral in one way or another, this kind of conflicts affects loyalty to the system instead of the colleagues. However, the obstacles mentioned by the teachers are yet the disapproval of the colleagues. The problem is classic - if some teachers show disobedience to orders, then how do you explain the obedience of the others? In this reasoning the conformity of behaviour is important. It looks like any immoral behaviour becomes acceptable if everyone carries it out. The conflicts above activate this incongruity and make obvious the inconsistence of institutional norms and professional care about the students.

The risk of suspended moral

According to the above thesis, that teachers sometimes are forced by the schoolsystem to expose the pupils to harmful treatment, it is not surprising that teachers have no trust in their own ability to determine what is right or wrong. The double-bind-message to the students is an contradition built in the schools executed by the teachers; *we want your own best but we sometimes have to hurt you in order to get you where we want.*

The teachers referred to in this study have identified an ethical conflict and explicitly described the alternative actings - the one they choosed and the other which they in fact think was the right one. They are aware of the conflict between what they think is the right thing to do and their actual acting. They have not yet lost their sense of how to be morally good. However, being permanently forced or tempted to ethical compromises can lead to doubt or rejection of fundamental principles of

right or wrong. Campbell (1993) claims that *compromise allows individuals to suspend or abandon their sense of moral responsibility and explain their actions solely in role-based statements of false necessity; all behaviour, both good and bad, right and wrong, is justified as the outcome of simply doing one´s job. In some cases such individuals experience ethical guilt; in others they suspend their guilt along with their morality* (p 5).

Loyalty to institutional norms and compromising with one´s own sense of what is morally good can bring about different kinds of morally deficient development of teachers. The worst consequence is the *ethical deafness*. The deaf does not even perceive that there are ethical considerations to be done in teaching. Another category are those who Campbell describes as justifying their acting by *doing their job*. They do not make themselves responsible for any ethical options. If the system tells that an act is right then they do not reflect upon it.

The third category are those referred to in this study. They recognize the conflict and they describe their acting with self-criticism. They have not suspended their guilt. Therefore they are the most *ethical sensitive* and therefore they have the greatest difficulties. Nothing, or at least very little, in the school system engourage them to keep sensitive. On the contrary, they meet several signs that their ethical doubts are uncomfortable and improper. It is not surprising that they do not trust their own sense of what is right or wrong. Furthermore, there are no explicit norms to be used as references.

In the absence of explicit ethical norms any norm and way of handling the pupils seems to be acceptable. This makes it difficult for a teacher to interfere in a colleague´s treatment of the students and blow the whistle. The question he is asking himself and which is stopping him is: *How can I claim that I know what is best for the children? We just have different opinions, my colleague and I.* All values and norms seem to be relative, like questions of preference or taste. The privacy of the teachers´ interpretation of their moral obligation leaves them alone and abandoned with ethical conflicts of this kind and other.

Final reflections

This paper discusses the question of teachers possibilities to be morally good. To blow the whistle in order to protect students from harm seems to be almost impossible since it demands a lot of courage and awareness from the single teacher. In his own classroom the individual teacher has an area where he is free to let his own norms dominate as far as they do

not risk the formal policy. To blow the whistle, therfore is to interfere in another teacher´s private space.

Another question, raised as a consequence of the original one, concerns the possibility for teachers as a professional collective to develop an ethic of teaching, with the purport of putting students needs as the most important value. Would they be allowed to take pupils´ well-being into consideration more than they now do? The school as an institution in the society often requires teachers to neglect children´s needs,and consequently a high ethical standard would be complicated if not contradictory. Some teachers in this study describe themselves as members of some sort of underground movement, when following their conscience. What would happen if they explicit acted on behalf of the pupils either against colleagues or school as an institution? The development of teacher ethics would from this perspective be a rebellious activity which would threaten the schoolsystem.

The preliminary answer to the question raised if it is possible to be a morally good teacher seems to be:

1. It is possible but difficult to be morally good. When it is possible it is because the moral act is not conflicting any institutional norm.

2. It is almost impossible when the act interferes in other teachers privacy.

3. It would hardly be possible to make ethical norms explicit in order to strengthen the professional ethics in teaching profession.

References

Bok,S. (1988) Whistleblowing and Professional Responsibilities. In Callahan, J. (ed) *Ethical Issues in Professional Life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Campbell, E. (1993) Personal Morals and Organizational Ethics: How teachers and principals cope with conflicting values in the context of school cultures. Paper presented at the XXI *Annual Conference of The Canadian Society for the Study of Education,* Carleton Univesity, Ottawa, June, 1993.

Clark, C.M. & Petersen, P.L. (1986) Teachers´ Thought Processes. In Wittrock, M.C. *Handbook of Research on Teaching.* New York: New York Cop.

Clark,C.M. (1990) The Teacher and the Taught: Moral Transactions in the Classroom. In J. Goodlad (ed) *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching* . San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Clark, C.M. (1991) Educating the Good Teacher. *Key-note at I S AT T,* 1991.

Darling-Hammond,L. (1985) Valuing Teachers: The making of a Profession.*Teachers College Record.* Vol 87, No 2, 1985.

Elbaz, F. (1991) Hope, Attentiveness and Caring for Difference: The Moral Voice in Teaching. *Paper at the I S AT T-conference,* 1991.

Goodlad, J. (1990) *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Hargreaves,A.(1991) Teaching and Guilt: Exploring the Feeling of Teaching. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of A E R A, Chicago,* 1991.

Higgins, A. (1990) From Moral Judgement to Moral Action: Assessing the Educational Impact of a second Generation og Just Community Programs. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of A E R A, Boston, 1990*

Jackson, P. (1968) *Life in Classrooms.* Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

James, G. (1988) In Defense of Whistleblowing. In Callahan, J. *Ethical Issues in Professional Life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kohlberg, L. (1981) *The Philosophy of Moral Development.* Vol 1. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Kristiansen, A. (1991) The Interpersonal Dimensions of Teaching. Some Ethical Aspects. *Paper presented at The Nordic Teacher Training Congress* Lahti, Finland, 1991.

Lyons, N. (1990) Dilemmas of knowing: Ethical and Epistemological Dimensions of Teacher´s Work and Development. *Harvard Educational Review* Vol 60, No 2, 1990

Løgstrup, K. (1956) *Den etiske fordring.* Köpenhamn.

McTaggart, R. (1989) Bureaucratic Rationality and the Self-Education Profession: The Problem of Teacher Privatism. *Journal of Curriculum Studies.* Vol 21 nr 4.

Oser, F.K. (1990) Types of professional morality and the development of a questionnaire. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of A E R A, Boston. 1990.*

Sockett, H. (1990) Accountability, Trust and Ethical Codes of Practice. In Goodlad,J. (ed) *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Soder, R. (1990) The Rhetoric of Teacher Professionalization. In Goodlad, J. (ed) *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Strike,K. & Soltis, J. (1985) *The Ethics of Teaching.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Terhart, E. (1987) Vermütungen über das Lehrerethos. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik.* Heft 6/87.

Tom, A. (1984) *Teaching as a Moral Craft.* New York: Longman.